

# Proposal

**To Establish a Strong Research and Technical  
Foundation for the Delta Trails Planning Process**

**VALLEY VISION**



*Connecting Citizens  
Shaping Solutions*

**May 11, 2007**



## The Great California Delta Trail System

### The Setting

The California State Legislature created the Delta Commission in September of 1992 as a diverse collection of stakeholders and governmental entities dedicated to the preservation of the agricultural, habitat, and recreational resources of the 738,000-acre Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. In 1995 the Commission created and adopted a *Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta* as mandated in the Delta Protection Act. The Commission works collaboratively with local and regional governments, state and federal agencies and Delta stakeholders to proactively protect, preserve and enhance the Delta and its many resources and natural beauty while addressing urban growth through the inclusion of the Commission's Management Plan in the general plans of Delta counties and cities.

Recognizing the uniqueness of the Delta, in 2006 the Legislature and Gov. Schwarzenegger approved Senate Bill 1556 (Torlakson), which establishes The Great California Delta Trail System. This bill requires the Delta Protection Commission "to establish a continuous recreation corridor, including bicycle and hiking trails, around the Delta," and to link these trails with the San Francisco Bay Trails as well as planned Sacramento River Trails in Yolo and Sacramento Counties. This network of planned trails will weave throughout the Delta shorelines in Contra Costa, San Joaquin, Solano, Sacramento, and Yolo counties.

Valley Vision is pleased to offer this proposal to take the first step in making the Trail network a reality. We have been involved in some of the most innovative large-scale regional planning processes in the nation, and we can leverage this experience and a methodology that respects and maximizes the role of citizens and government to create sustained results.

We propose three distinct project phases to bridge the gap from today to the implementation of The Great California Delta Trail:

- ✚ Phase I: Understand the lay of the land. Projects that start from a strong base of information have a much greater chance of success.
- ✚ Phase II: Create the Vision. Engage the public, technical experts and key government officials in creating an inspiring vision and detailed plan that is truly embraced by all.
- ✚ Phase III: Implement the Vision: Assemble the resources and policy changes to support the actual construction and long-term care of the Trail.

This proposal covers all aspects of Phase I and will result in the creation of a detailed plan to complete Phase II.

## **An Overview of Valley Vision**

Valley Vision is a nonprofit association of people and organizations working to secure the social, environmental and economic health of the Sacramento Region. Founded in 1994, we are an “action tank” committed to regional problem-solving and objective research for sound decision-making. To affect change, Valley Vision serves as a neutral convener of a broad cross-section of the Sacramento region’s leadership, including business, government, agriculture, the environmental community, organized labor, education, utilities and the nonprofit sector. We also partner with organizations in other regions to affect change on a wider geographic scale.

Our partners value working with us because we bring a boundary-crossing point of view. Our work provides us with opportunities to see connections and build linkages between public health, land use, transportation, education, and economic development. Some examples of Valley Vision’s recent successes include:

### **Planning on a Regional Scale**

Valley Vision brings a strong track-record of regional-scale planning projects. We partnered with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) to complete the **Blueprint Project**. This effort engaged over 5,000 citizens throughout the region and employed innovative modeling technology that gave instant feedback on policy choices to produce smarter, broadly-supported planning outcomes. The result: an integrated “blueprint” for our region that guides transportation and land-use decision-making over the next 50 years, factoring in key regional considerations like air quality and open space. Nearly every jurisdiction in the six-county SACOG region endorsed or approved the project. It also won numerous awards, including the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This project model will transfer well to the Great California Delta Trail Project and help turn a project into a movement.

**The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035**, the regional transportation strategy for the next three decades, is the next phase in the **Blueprint Project** and the first MTP to be integrated into the Sacramento Region’s land-use strategy. Valley Vision worked in cooperation with SACOG to conduct public outreach throughout the six-county region and to provide information about the MTP process to the community at large. Valley Vision was successful in getting over 3,000 “citizen planners” to participate in community workshops and one large transportation forum held simultaneously in eight separate locations around the region. A large array of other community members were also engaged in the MTP process through Valley Vision’s targeted outreach designed to reach diverse populations that otherwise might not have been involved. Valley Vision and SACOG were successful in their intent to hear from a large cross-section of residents in the Sacramento Region in order to ensure real community input on a transportation plan that will, ultimately, affect the region’s quality of life.

In our current **Regional Open Space Project** Valley Vision is partnering with a group of environmental, business, planning and regulatory organizations to gather and develop important information about the status of our rural landscape. With technical assistance from the

Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Valley Vision is creating an up-to-date inventory and GIS map of all regional lands that are protected for non-urban uses in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. Following this first-of-its-kind inventory, the partners and Valley Vision plan to work with a wide range of stakeholders – from local land-use and wildlife planners and conservation leaders to the development community and many others – to identify how best to address open space issues at a six-county scale.

### **Collaborative Data-Driven Reports**

Valley Vision has significant, relevant experience collaborating with multiple partners to develop reports about the Sacramento region. In 2004 Valley Vision partnered with several agencies, including the Community Services Planning Council, to develop the **2004 Sacramento Region Quality of Life Report**. In each update of the 42 indicators in the *Quality of Life Report* Valley Vision strives to innovate; the 2004 report emphasized racial and ethnic demographic data and county-specific data to highlight regional disparities. In addition, our highly successful communications plan for this report included distribution of 5,000 copies to elected officials and opinion leaders, a news conference that generated significant media coverage, presentations to community and leadership groups throughout the region, and ongoing availability of the report through the web and CD-ROM.

### **Complex Collaborative Initiatives:**

In 2005 Valley Vision successfully facilitated 34 economic development and business organizations across six counties in developing the ***Partnership for Prosperity: A Business Plan for the Sacramento Region***. This effort began with 50 stakeholder interviews and expert opinion gathering, which Valley Vision analyzed and synthesized for use as a baseline across several months of facilitated discussion and planning. Valley Vision continues to facilitate the Partnership's action teams of coalition members, ensuring the plan will not "sit on the shelf." Valley Vision also works with a communications team to craft marketing, branding, and media support.

Valley Vision is the project facilitator for the **Hmong Health Project**, which is a multi-year collaboration of 10 agencies working on health issues in the Central Valley's Hmong community, funded by The California Endowment. Our role is to support the capacity building, facilitation and planning of this initiative over the next two years as its members gather information, share best practices, and engage with policy-makers to address the systemic health issues of California's large Hmong community.

## **Our Approach: Phase I Proposal**

### **Task 1: Key Informant Interviews**

The Delta Trails Project is a mosaic of moving parts. Multiple jurisdictions, diverse stakeholders and partners, and important technical considerations complicate the landscape. In such complex circumstances, robust information is critical to removing ambiguity and illuminating the planning process. Valley Vision has demonstrated the capacity to sift through the noise, and efficiently and effectively gather the right information from diverse populations of stakeholders with various levels of interest and influence.

For the Delta Trails Project we will do this by conducting a series of iterative interviews with key stakeholders. The interviews will be conducted in a series, with each round informing the next, allowing us to refine the questions we ask as well as define whom we interview. We propose to begin with the Delta Protection Commission members, and then allow the commissioners to influence the next round of interviewees. The process will be complete when we feel confident we have captured a thorough assessment of ideas and opinions affecting the project, evidenced by reaching a plateau of new information being obtained from the interviews. We estimate between 65 and 70 interviews will be needed in this phase of the project.

Through this iterative process we will define the universe of key stakeholders and issues that will become instrumental in the planning process. Other anticipated outcomes include:

- ✚ Defining the composition and role of the Stakeholder Committee;
- ✚ Gauging the level of support for the Trail project;
- ✚ Furthering the cause of the project by spreading the word;
- ✚ Uncovering issues, ideas, opportunities, and concerns that will impact the project;
- ✚ Identifying potential stakeholders that are currently unknown to the commission;
- ✚ Assisting the commission in more fully understanding distinct visions, specific ideas, and technical insights held by various stakeholders.

As part of this task we will present preliminary findings to the Commission and refine our final steps to meet needs that arise at that time.

### **Task Two: Identify Best Practices in Planning Major Trails**

Valley Vision will draw on lessons-learned from projects similar in scope and complexity, and both report on our findings and integrate the most relevant ideas into our recommendations for Phase II. Two examples are the Coastal Trail and the San Francisco Bay Trail. We propose to research these and up to two others. Decades of experience has produced knowledge, wisdom and expertise that can be utilized to avoid costly mistakes, reduce planning and implementation cycles, and ensure the Delta Trail Project integrates the best practices of other similar initiatives. We will produce a Best Practices Report and present findings to the Commission.

### **Task Three: Define Technical Needs and Options**

Detailed technical information will establish the framework for decision-making and will build a strong foundation for the planning of the Trail. The trail system will cover several counties, involve dozens of cities and local districts, and numerous branches of federal, local, and state governments. We will be working with private landowners, various environmental and recreational organizations, agencies, and industries. Through our outreach efforts and consultations with technical experts, we'll identify the technical needs to successfully complete Phase II and options for cost-effectively securing the support needed in this area. We will identify any items that would require consultants and define a scope of work if necessary, and we will investigate interactive technologies that may be useful in gathering public input. Ultimately, our findings will help us shape a recommended composition and role for the Technical Advisory Committee essential for Phase II.

We will also identify the technical roles of the three Councils of Governments. We will work closely with them to clarify their degrees of interest, willingness to invest resources, and their

level of engagement in the project. Similarly, if other critical partners emerge during our research and scoping process, we will identify the niches they may fill in later phases of the project.

#### **Task Four: Create Linkages with Parallel Efforts and Potential Partners**

As we continue with information gathering it is inevitable that we will discover resources, related initiatives, potential partners, and other efforts that can and should be brought into alignment with the Delta Trail Project. By establishing open communication and forging relationships, we will begin the process of building linkages with these various entities and making their efforts known to the Commission. We will identify where efforts overlap and begin the process of negotiating roles. The Commission will have a ‘stakeholder map’ with the overlaps and potential partners identified.

#### **Task Five: Develop and Refine Project Plan**

Task Five will reflect a synthesis of the vast array of stakeholder input, technical information, and our organizational expertise. Using the methodologies from the **Blueprint Project** as our beginning template, we will outline the best way to gather input from thousands of engaged citizens and integrate this information into a concise, comprehensive vision and detailed plan customized to the unique circumstances and needs of the Delta. Our plan will include a definition of key policy issues and potential pathways for implementation. In the end, the Commission will possess its own ‘blueprint’ for moving the Great California Delta Trail System forward and making the dream of many into a reality that all Californians can be proud of.

## Timeline

### Project Length: 4.5 Months

<b>Task 1 - Key Informant Interviews</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Completed</b>
Initial 23 Interviews with Commission Members	June 1	July 10th
Interview analysis	July 10	July 20
Second Round of Interviews (estimate 25)	July 20	August 10
Interview Analysis	August 10	August 20
Third Round of Interviews (estimate 20)	August 20	September 10
Preliminary Analysis of Interviews	September 10	September 15
Check in with Commission	As Scheduled	As Scheduled
Final wrap up Interviews	As Scheduled	As Scheduled
Final Interview Analysis		October 1
<b>Task 2 - Best Practices Search</b>		
Interview Participants - Three to Four Major Trail projects	June 1	July 20
Research Methods and Study Materials	June 1	July 20
Create Final Best Practice Report	July 20	July 31
<b>Task 3 - Technical Requirements Analysis</b>		
Determine role of COGS	July 15	September 15
Determine Role of Planning Firms	July 15	September 15
Develop Technical Committee Structure	July 15	September 15
Research potential mapping tools and technology	July 15	September 15
Research and inventory maps and available tools	July 15	September 15
<b>Task 4 - Partner and Related Organization Coordination</b>		
Meetings with Related Organizations	July 15	September 15
Negotiate Roles and Produce Stakeholder Map	July 15	September 15
<b>Task 5 - Develop and Refine Phase II Project Plan</b>		
Develop Plan	September 15	October 1
Check in with Key Partners	September 15	October 15
Two sets of meetings and revisions with Commission	As Scheduled	As Scheduled

## Budget

Project Budget	Labor Cost	Hard Costs	Notes
<b>Overall Project Management</b>			
Day to Day Project Management	\$12,150		
Bi-monthly team meetings	\$19,350		
Bi- monthly check-ins with Delta Protection Commission staff	\$2,700		
	\$34,200		
<b>Task 1 - Key Informant Interviews</b>			
Initial 23 Interviews with Commission Members	\$8,885	\$1,000	Materials
Interview analysis	\$2,890		
Second Round of Interviews (estimate 25)	\$7,180	\$500	Travel
Interview Analysis	\$2,775		
Third Round of Interviews (estimate 20)	\$5,500	\$500	Travel
Preliminary Analysis of Interviews	\$2,400		
Check in with Commission	\$1,620		
Final wrap up Interviews	\$2,365		
Final Interview Analysis	\$3,315		
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$36,930		
<b>Task 2 - Best Practices Search</b>			
Interview Participants - Five Major Trail projects	\$3,210	\$600	Travel
Research Methods and Study Materials	\$8,630		
Create Final Best Practice Report	\$3,910		
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$15,750		
<b>Task 3 - Technical Requirements Analysis</b>			
Determine role of COGS	\$7,900	\$1,000	Travel
Determine Role of Planning Firms	\$8,125		
Develop Technical Committee Structure	\$6,065		
Research potential mapping tools and technology	\$8,125		
Research and inventory maps and available tools	\$7,955	\$1,000	Materials
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$30,270		
<b>Task 4 – Partners and Related Organization Coordination</b>			
Meetings with Related Organizations	\$9,900	\$500	Travel
Negotiate Roles and Produce Stakeholder Map	\$8,250	\$300	Materials
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$18,150		
<b>Task 5 - Develop and Refine Project Plan</b>		\$300	
Develop Plan	\$16,900		
Check in with Key Partners	\$3,700		
Two sets of meetings and revisions with Commission	\$6,050		
<b>Subtotal</b>	\$26,650		
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	\$161,950	\$5,700	
<b>15% Administrative and Contingency</b>	\$25,148		
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$187,098	\$192,798	